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Statement submitted by World Jewellery Confederation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) supports the theme of the 2017 ECOSOC High-level segment, and through the programme that it has devised for the international jewellery and gemstone industries seeks to further this goal.

A high-value product, sold predominantly in more affluent consumer markets, characterizes the jewellery and gemstone business. However, the raw materials of which these products are comprised are overwhelmingly sourced and largely processed in developing economies.

By helping orchestrate a shift of a larger proportion of the jewellery and gemstone industry's chain of distribution to these developing economies, thereby increasing their share of the total added value produced by the materials sourced in their territories, CIBJO believes that it is possible to create new economic opportunity and addressing related challenges is both sustainable and incremental, and which will be a critical element in helping to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions in regions where it is endemic. These primary opportunities in turn will result in secondary opportunities.

This shift is already occurring. In the diamond industry, for example, whereas the predominant rough distribution hub for more than a century was London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, today this is managed in the producing countries. Furthermore, increasing proportion of raw materials is retained in the producing countries to be processed domestically, rather than being exported for processing in other countries. This constitutes new evidence in poverty eradication efforts.

It is CIBJO's belief that, while these processes are imperative, they will be inadequate if the ethical integrity of the jewellery and gemstone product is not ensured, and also if the opportunities being created in these developing economies do not permeate into the grassroots of the communities. CIBJO is acting in both these respects allowing inclusive economic growth.

Through its educational arm, the World Jewellery Confederation Educational Foundation (WJCEF), and with the support of the Italian Exhibition Group, CIBJO has devised an educational programme that is designed to provide solutions for ethical challenges, including conflict minerals, money laundering and terrorist financing, corruption, unfair labour practices and improper health and safety, while at the same time emphasizing ways in which the industry can have positive social impacts.

CIBJO is also working with third parties to develop online and offline tools that can be used by the industry to trace and monitor the integrity of the chain of distribution, and also to ensure that the protocols that are adopted by the industry can easily be applied to small and medium-sized enterprises. The online tools can also monitor positive social and economic impacts.

Additionally, CIBJO also has implemented a comprehensive programme designed to protect the physical environment and biodiversity in areas where gemstones and jewellery are produced. This includes educational activities, and also a carbon-offsetting programme. In certain instances, particularly in the pearl sector, responsible environmental management contributes to the quality of the product produced, and thus improves its economic viability and sustainability.

In summary, CIBJO obtains transformational changes that promote opportunities, increase inclusive economic growth and sustainable development for all through partnerships.